

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 123

Introduced by Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal

March 6, 2012

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 123—Relative to Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Denim Day California.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 123, as introduced, Bonnie Lowenthal. Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Denim Day California.

This measure would designate the month of April 2012 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month, would recognize April 25, 2012, as Denim Day California, and would encourage everyone to wear jeans on that day to help communicate the message that there is no excuse for, and never an invitation to commit rape.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, In 2011, California rape crisis centers provided
2 direct crisis intervention services to 29,993 individuals, provided
3 6,887 sexual assault forensic examinations, and provided
4 community education services for more than 120,000 people; and
5 WHEREAS, The American Medical Association has stated that
6 a “woman is raped every 46 seconds in the United States” and that
7 sexual assault is a “silent epidemic”; and
8 WHEREAS, Women, children, and men are all victims of sexual
9 assault and it is estimated that nearly one in two women and one
10 in five men experience sexual violence other than rape throughout
11 their lifetime; and

1 WHEREAS, The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence
2 Survey reports that there are over 22 million survivors of rape
3 throughout the United States and 2 million of those survivors of
4 rape are currently living in the State of California; and

5 WHEREAS, Rape and sexual assault impacts women, children,
6 and men of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds; and

7 WHEREAS, Women, children, and men suffer multiple types
8 of sexual violence including acquaintance rape, stranger rape,
9 sexual assault by an intimate partner, gang rape, incest, serial rape,
10 ritual abuse, sexual harassment, child sexual molestation,
11 prostitution, pornography, and stalking; and

12 WHEREAS, In addition to the immediate physical and emotional
13 costs, sexual assault may also have severe and long-lasting
14 consequences of post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse,
15 major depression, homelessness, eating disorders, and suicide; and

16 WHEREAS, The federal Centers for Disease Control and
17 Prevention have identified sexual assault as a significant, costly,
18 and preventable health issue; and

19 WHEREAS, A coalition of rape crisis centers and their allies,
20 known as the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault, has
21 emerged to directly confront this crisis with the cooperation of law
22 enforcement agencies, churches, health care providers, and other
23 helping professionals from California's diverse communities; and

24 WHEREAS, It is our responsibility to support rape survivors
25 by treating them with dignity, compassion, and respect; and

26 WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the compassion and
27 dedication of the individuals involved in this effort, applaud their
28 commitment, and increase public understanding of this significant
29 problem; and

30 WHEREAS, It is important to recognize the strength, courage,
31 and challenges of the victims and survivors of sexual assault and
32 their families and friends as they struggle to cope with the reality
33 of sexual assault; and

34 WHEREAS, It is important to recognize that not all victims of
35 sexual assault survive, either at the time of the assault or later, due
36 to the horrific long-term trauma that sexual assault often inflicts
37 upon victims; and

38 WHEREAS, There are rape prevention and education efforts
39 underway throughout California to challenge the societal myths

1 and behaviors that perpetuate rape and to engage communities in
2 a common goal of ending sexual assault; and

3 WHEREAS, It is crucially important to hold perpetrators
4 responsible for sexual attacks, and to prevent sexual violence at
5 every opportunity; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1998, the Italian Supreme Court overturned the
7 conviction of a man who sexually assaulted an 18-year-old woman
8 after the court determined that, “because the victim wore very,
9 very tight jeans, she had to help him remove them, and by removing
10 the jeans it was no longer rape but consensual sex”; and

11 WHEREAS, Enraged by the court decision, within a matter of
12 hours the women in the Italian Parliament launched into immediate
13 action and protested by wearing jeans to work; and

14 WHEREAS, Nations and states throughout the world have
15 followed the lead of the Italian Parliament by designating their
16 own “Denim Day” to raise public awareness about rape and sexual
17 assault; and

18 WHEREAS, Harmful attitudes about rape and sexual assault
19 allow these crimes to persist and allow survivors to be revictimized
20 through victim-blaming attitudes and unresponsive government
21 systems; and

22 WHEREAS, California is a national leader within the judicial,
23 criminal justice, medical, rape crisis, and health communities in
24 promoting victim-centered approaches to victims of crime; now,
25 therefore, be it

26 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
27 *thereof concurring*, That the month of April 2012 shall be
28 designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month; and be it further

29 *Resolved*, That the Legislature recognizes April 25, 2012, as
30 “Denim Day California” and encourages everyone to wear jeans
31 on that day to help communicate the message that there is no
32 excuse for, and never an invitation to commit rape.

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